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1955/04/04

SECRET

April 4, 1955

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION:

SUBJECT: Call by Ambassador Tran Van Chuong, April 4.

1. Ambassador Chuong paid a courtesy call on Ambassador Collins April 4. Chuong said that he was in Saigon on routine consultation, and that his presence had nothing to do with the current crisis. He said that he had delayed his trip for a month hoping that the Michigan State Contract would be ready for signature. He said that he believed the Contract is at last completed and ready to be signed. He proposes to leave Saigon to return to Washington April 6.

2. With reference to the present crisis, Ambassador Collins said that all efforts to bring about a broadening of the Government have failed to date. At the present time, knowledge of Diem's deficiencies in working with his Ministries, particularly demonstrated in his treatment of Ho Thong Minh, ~~he~~ made it more than ever difficult to attract capable men to the Government. Ambassador Chuong said that he would tell Diem when he saw him that he believed it necessary also that the Government be reorganized. However, he asked if this would solve the problem. Ambassador Collins replied that the sect problem could, of course, not be solved in a week.

3. Ambassador Collins asked Chuong whom he would suggest as candidates for the Ministries of Defense and Interior. Chuong said that in view of his official position, he would not like to mention any names. Ambassador Collins warned that if Diem does not act quickly within a week, he may have no Government at all. Chuong said that he would give his advice to Diem complete with suggested names.

4. After leaving Ambassador Collins, Chuong told Sturm that he believed Diem is strongly of the opinion that if his "hands had not been tied" he would have been able to defeat the Binh Xuyen.

cc: Political Section



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